



HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 14TH JANUARY 2018

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

· A ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH · THE DOMINICAN PRESENCE IN LEICESTER SINCE 1247 ·

A WORD FROM THE PRIOR ...

The stories of the calling together of the first disciples, as they are recounted in the different Gospels, are some of the most humanly touching parts of the Gospels. There's a deep humanity there – we see the humanity of Christ, as a man who inspires, and draws others to him. There's a loyalty and a bonding, the spark that starts a beautiful friendship. You can tell already that these men will endure anything together. They'll enrich each other, develop each other, and cherish each other.

What a great model for discipleship, and what a great plan for a parish, for the Church. The Lord chooses a group of people, brings them together, gives them the Word of God, and helps them to focus on Him so that they can remain united to Him through the bond they share with one another.

I was struck by this during the past week, as we were involved with planning the events for the term ahead, and catching up with developments in our schools and chaplaincies. There's the excitement of having the opportunity to serve the Lord in one another, and to make Him known through our efforts. And it's great to be working together again to achieve this.

Be intent on prayer, and whatever may happen will turn to our good.

Fr David

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR THE EASTER SEASON

RCIA – This is the sacramental programme which prepares adults to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist). It is also the means by which we prepare baptised adults for Confirmation and Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church. An information meeting and initial gathering will take place on Saturday 3 February, at 1:15pm, meeting in the church. Please contact us on leicester@english.op.org or call the office if you are interested.

CHURCH LIGHTING PROJECT NOW UNDERWAY

We have commissioned Mealey Electrical Contractors Ltd to install a new lighting system in the church, at a cost of £65,000. The contractors arrived during the week and have begun the process of installation. We are grateful to them for ensuring that the church was returned to full use for the weekend. Please note that, in order to facilitate the works, all Masses from Monday – Friday will be celebrated in the Lady Chapel until further notice. As always, we deeply appreciate your ongoing generosity, which has enabled the project to take place.

THE MONTH OF JANUARY – THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

During the month of January, the Church encourages us to renew our devotion and reverence for the Most Holy Name of Jesus. Hopefully this particular devotion will begin to shape our preparation for the National Eucharistic Congress in 2018.

NOTICE BOARD

BAPTISM PREPARATION

If you wish to have your child baptised, please attend one of our baptism preparation sessions. The next is Sunday 4 February after the 10:30am Mass in St Clement's Hall.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CONFIRMATION

Please get in touch with the Priory Office if members of your family wish to celebrate these sacraments.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Couples who are preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony should make an appointment with the Parish Priest in the first instance.

BECOMING CATHOLIC

Any adult who wishes to become a Catholic or receive Confirmation should join our RCIA programme, which will begin in the next few weeks.

VISITING THE SICK

The Faithful who are sick and housebound can arrange a visit from a priest or special minister by calling 0116 252 1501.

FAMILY VISITS

Families who would like a house blessing or a pastoral visit at home, can make arrangements by calling 0116 252 1501

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION IN 2018

This year we will celebrate First Holy Communions on Sunday 27 May at 10:30am Mass. Parents of children aged 7 years and above who would like to put their children forward for this year are invited to fill in a form and return it to the sacristy. The programmes to prepare our families for this special day will begin shortly. Likewise, parents of children who are of secondary school age and would like to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation should pass their details to the office. We hope to receive a date from Bishop Patrick very soon.

FEAST OF BLESSED CYPRIAN TANSI – NEXT SATURDAY, 20 JAN

Saturday 20 January is the feast day of Blessed Cyprian Tansi, a monk of Mount St Bernard Abbey who died in the Leicester Royal Infirmary. He is the first Nigerian to have been venerated as Blessed. Some of the Nigerian members of our community will lead us in song at 12:30pm Mass on that day, and we will share some Nigerian food after Mass. Please do make the effort to come along.

HOLY CROSS SOCIAL GROUP

We meet every Tuesday from 6.30-8.00pm (doors open at 6.00) in St. Clement's Hall (entrance by the ramp next to the priory car park). We enjoy a light bite to eat, chat and play the occasional game of cards or fun bingo. Newcomers always welcome. For more details, contact Jeff on hcross.social@gmail.com.

CHAPLAINCY TO OUR UNIVERSITIES

Mass will be celebrated on both campuses this week – Wednesdays at 1:15pm at the University of Leicester and 3pm at DMU. We offer special prayers for those currently sitting examinations and completing coursework, and congratulate those who are soon to graduate.

LEICESTER CATHOLIC STUDENTS

Our regular "Catholic Wednesday" events will return on 31 January, and this term will explore a range of "hot topics" for Catholics. Please see our forthcoming adverts for more details. In addition, students will meet together on a number of Sundays for Sunday Lunch. As things get moving, we'll keep you up to date with the plans as they develop!

CATHOLICISM 101

The popular series, which is an opportunity to share some food and then some input on our faith will take a break for the dark nights of January and resume for a further six sessions on the Thursday nights in Lent. More details will emerge soon.

THE DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

Fr David Rocks OP PP *Prior*; Fr Isidore Clarke OP; Fr Fabian Radcliffe OP;
Fr Tony Rattigan OP *Bursar*; Fr Robert Gay OP CC *Subprior*; Fr Matthew Jarvis OP

Office Administrator: *Mrs Rachael Powell* – leicester.admin@english.op.org

Lay University Chaplain: *Mr George Ralph* – george.ralph@english.op.org

Director of Music: *Mr Thomas Keogh* – thomas@thomaskeogh.co.uk

For the Office Administrator, please call 0116 252 1501

Holy Cross Priory, 45 Wellington Street, LE1 6HW. Tel: 0116 252 1501

For more details, visit: www.holycrossleicester.org

MASS TIMES

Sundays:

8am; 10:30am (sung);
12:30pm (old rite);
7pm

Weekdays:

8am (old rite);
12:30pm; 6:10pm

Saturdays:

10am; 12.30pm;
6:10pm *Vigil Mass for Sunday*

CONFESSION

Saturdays:

10:30-11:30am
5:00-6:00pm

MONEY MATTERS

Last week's collections:

£ 1031.69

(Gift aided: £284.76)

Woodhouse Collection

£132.00

(Gift aided: £86.00)

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT!*

THE SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIMES

FIRST READING -

Samuel, one of the leading figures of the Old Testament, lived in a time of great political, social and religious upheavals. For over a century the Philistines who came from the islands of the Aegean, had settled along the coast. They had occupied the fertile plains of the land of Canaan, and forced Israel to live on the mountains where the land is arid and rocky. How to deal with these increasingly aggressive and intrusive neighbours? The undertaking seemed desperate because the Jewish tribes were divided and “everyone did what seemed good to him” (Jdg 21:25). It was during this time of transition, social and political confusion in the advent of the monarchy, that Samuel was called by God to lead the people. ^[1 S 3:1] The word of God—the preceding verse of our reading recalls—was rarely heard; visions were not seen” (1 S 3:1). Samuel was in charge to seize the Lord’s plans and communicate them to Israel. Today’s passage presents him as a teenager quietly growing at Shiloh, in the temple of the Lord. *One night he was called.* He heard a voice not knowing where it came from. He was not dreaming and it was not a vision. He needed the help and suggestions of someone capable of interpreting to him the meaning of what was happening.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Response: Here I am Lord! I come to do Your Will.

SECOND READING

In the metropolis of Corinth, it was not easy to behave in a manner consistent with the gospel. In fact, some members of the Christian community succumbed to the lure of the sacred prostitutes and were indulging in immoral behaviour. Upon learning of what had happened, Paul decided to address clearly the issue of sexual abuses. The reasons put forward in his letter are not perhaps what we expected: no threat of divine punishment, no mention of adverse consequences (although real and often tragic) for individuals and their families. The condemnation of fornication—in the sense of sexual activity outside of marriage—is derived from theological considerations and from the biblical tradition that considers the sexual act like a total involvement of both *partners* in one flesh (Gen 2:24). The shamelessness—says Paul—is incompatible with the life of the baptized, because the body of the Christian is the Lord’s. It can be given only to the one to whom he has decided to definitively offer, that is, to the groom and to the bride, in marital institution. A different use of one’s body is *an injustice*, a theft against God (vv. 13-14).

GOSPEL

Today’s passage should be read with attention to every detail and every nuance of language. John, in fact, chooses accurately the words and images. A first particular should be noted: the Baptist *was still there* (v. 35), in the same place where he was the day before, at Bethany beyond the Jordan (Jn 1:28). *Jesus had set himself in motion*; he started his journey, *he was passing*. John on the other hand had stopped; he had finished his mission, that of indicating the Messiah. He handed his disciples over to Jesus and agreed to disappear: “*It is necessary that he increases but that I decrease*” (Jn 3:29-30). The Greek word used by the evangelist to describe the perception that the Baptist had of Jesus is significant, *emblépein*. It does not mean only *to stare* but to look into it, contemplate the intimate of a person.

NEXT SUNDAY: THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (YEAR B)

"Frequently people lose time in longing for time to suit themselves, for they do not employ what they have otherwise than in suffering and gloominess."

St. Catherine of Siena

THE WORD AT WORK – OUR WEEKLY REFLECTION

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

Fr David reflects on the significance and centrality of the Eucharist in our lives, as we enter a period of preparation for the National Eucharistic Congress in 2018

John the Baptist has been a familiar figure for us in the last few weeks. During Advent, we met him in the wilderness, engaged in a curious diet, and living a radically different kind of life. A thoroughly strange man, who certainly made people think. In the Gospel of John, from which we read this Sunday, he points to Jesus as he says, "Look, there is the Lamb of God". And some men looked, and their lives changed forever. Little did they know they were about to change the fortunes of our race, and to be vessels for the salvation of us all.

Even before He begins his work of salvation, Jesus begins to draw a small group of followers to himself. They will be his disciples. To them, He speaks the Word of God, and around Himself He gathers them, forming them into a way of life that will seek to make sense of the sufferings of others, free them from sinful ways, and liberate them from infirmity and illness. These first followers began to draw one another – Simon Peter comes on the testimony of his brother Andrew. He calls Simon "Cephas" – "rock" – and following all that they will see, it is this little nucleus of followers who will bear the responsibility to proclaim the Resurrection to the ends of the earth.

"We have found the Messiah" – Andrew obviously rejoiced at John's invitation to look. When he saw the Lord, he recognised that this was the one who would perform the supreme sacrifice, who would take away the sins of all the world. So he sought to bring those close to him to share in it, and he remained close to the Lord on the long journey ahead. Many times, this little band of followers would want to follow other directions and paths. They would fail to see the wisdom of the Lord's teaching. Sometimes they remained with him reluctantly, or did his bidding with doubt. Indeed, at the highest point, their courage would fail them, and they were not able to remain to see the supreme sacrifice in the light of day. They would cower away from the Lord's Cross, not wishing to share in His Shame at that moment, but also shamed themselves. How true those words were, ringing in their ears, when He was raised on the Cross – Look, the Lamb of God. At that moment, did they know that the depth of their shame and cowardice was far surpassed by the extent of God's mercy for them.

We hear the same words every time we come to Mass – Behold, the Lamb of God. Behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Just like those disciples, we have experienced the grace of our faith in Baptism, long before we could say what any of it meant. Even now, when we find it puzzling, we remain close to the Lord, and to one another in the midst of the Church. Look at me, I am not worthy, but only say the Word, and my soul shall be healed. The very life in me will be renewed by this wonderful sacrament, a powerful medicine for the weak and unworthy.

When we say these words in the Mass, we're just like those disciples. Seeing the Lord's Shame on the Cross, we might well cower and seek to cover our own. Sometimes we're not sure if we want to follow His teachings. But in reflecting on the extent of our own shame and unworthiness, we are given the opportunity to receive healing, and communion with the Lord and with one another.

In this most wonderful sacrament the whole of our lives are renewed. It is given to us to teach us about our salvation – our need for the nourishment of God's love, and the requirement to sacrifice our selfishness in order to receive it. We need to approach it with great care and attention. We need to experience the great joys it holds for us. We need to share these with others – we need to "Go, and announce the Gospel of the Lord."

What a wonderful foretaste of our redemption we share together each time we celebrate the Eucharist. How great it would be if that played an even greater part of all our lives. Behold, He is right there, waiting to fill us with His Grace.